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Indra as God of Fertility.—By E. WASHBURN HOPKINS, Professor in Yale University.

During the drought and famine which accompanied the outbreak of plague in India in 1896-1897 the peasants of the Ganges valley lived in the hope that 'Indra would send rain,' and further west, at Ahmedabad, the local priests circumambulated the city hymning the same desire in more orthodox form. For to the peasant Indra has lost his ancient personality and is vaguely conceived as a god somehow connected with Siva, but his essential character persists and as a divinity of rain and fertility he is even to-day potent in the imagination of the Hindu.

There is something that appeals to our imagination also in the realization that this god, who is older than Brahman, Vishnu, and Siva, still has his worshipers. No other god, unless it be the rather impersonal Heaven of the Chinese, has been revered with uninterrupted devotion for so many centuries. The gods of Egypt and Babylon were born earlier perhaps, but they all died long ago. Indra, worshiped to-day, was already a notable god fourteen hundred years before the Christian era. His contemporaries, Varuna, Mitra, and the 'healing' Twins, who correspond to the Dioskouroi, have long since vanished from the mind of the people. But Indra perdures, at least as giver of rain.

Outside of India, this god, under the name Indra or Andra (possibly connected with Anglo-Saxon *ent*, 'giant') was recognized as a demon so important that he stands third in the list of evil spirits opposed to the good powers of the Zoroastrian, his only superiors being the Evil One himself and the Corpse-demon.

In my *Epic Mythology* I have pointed out that Indra in epic literature is a god of fertility as well as a god of battles. The feast of Indra, which comes at the end of the wet season (cf. BS. 43), is a stated festival, not, as later, a celebration of a victory, in which a pole gaudily decked is set up as the central object of a popular merry-making. Indra is the 'crop-controller,' *pākaśāsana* (misunderstood of course as 'controller of Pāka' and interpreted in terms of war as conqueror). All grain that springs up without cultivation is called grain raised by

Indra. He is ‘lord of the water-givers (clouds).’ The expression ‘when it rains’ is indifferently ‘when the god rains’ or ‘when Vāsava (Indra) rains.’ When a categorical answer is demanded to the question ‘What is the especial business of Indra?’, the answer is not ‘to lead the gods to battle’ but ‘to bestow energy, children, and happiness’ (*op. cit.* p. 123 f.).

The bestowal of energy and of children is a function of Indra, noticed as early as the Rig-Veda, to which I called attention in this JOURNAL twenty-one years ago; but its importance has been practically ignored since then, as it was in previous discussions of the god’s character. Ludwig, for example, in his *résumé* did not even allude to it. Nevertheless, if we consider the persistence of this trait through the native literature, it cannot be relegated to a subsidiary place, as if fertility-giving were a late-developed attribute of a panergetes or *viśvakarman* god, though this title is given him in the Rig-Veda.

To resume the study of Indra in post-Vedic works, it is significant that the law-book of Manu recognizes him only as a god of power who ‘rains for four months.’ His wife, according to Pāraskara (2. 17. 9), is Sītā, that is, the personified furrow (not Sāvitri, as native tradition has it). The sacrifice to Indra is here conjoined with that to (the fertile field) Urvarā, also called Sītā, and to Bhūti, personified Prosperity, the offerings being of rice and barley. Baudhāyana (3. 3) agrees with the epic in recognizing all wild plant life as produced by Indra. Several plants are called especially by his name. An early example is that of the *ādāra*-plants known as ‘Indra’s might’ (SB. 14. 1. 2. 12). In the Sautrāmanī (ib. 12. 7. 1) the meaning of the legend that plants and virile forces come from his body is that he produces the plants and animals mentioned. He is here the ‘giver of life.’ The he-goat and barley, with jujubes, the ram and ‘Indra-grain’ were the first products of his *vīrya* (virile or vital power); afterwards came the bull, horse, mule, ass, etc., till Indra lay exhausted and the gods said, ‘He was the best of us; let us cure him.’ Here too the bull is represented as the one animal especially sacred to Indra. These peculiarly virile animals, goat, rām, and bull reflect best the *vīrya* of the god, whose virtus to be sure is bravery but more essentially is virility. ‘The Earth, whose bull is Indra’ (AV. 12. 1. 6), is a distinct allusion to the fructification of earth through the god. That the god is the rain-god may be surmised even from the fact that

both in epic and legal literature the rainbow is called the ‘bow of Indra.’ Also the ‘net of Indra,’ which in the epic is regarded as a kind of magic weapon, is perhaps in its earlier appearance, where it encircles all men with darkness (AV. 8. 8. 8), nothing more than fog or mist. Indra’s ‘arrows’ or darts are rain (e. g. Pār. GS. 3. 15. 18).

The appeal, ‘Do not forsake us, Indra,’ is one offered at the ceremony of first-fruits and is followed by the marking of the cattle, also associated with the same god (SGS. 3. 8). But more than this, in sympathy with the whole conception of the Indra of every-day life, the sky is said to become pregnant with Indra and (at a certain time) the householder’s wife is addressed with the words, ‘(As) Indra puts the embryo in the cow, (so) do thou conceive’ (Hiran. GS. 1. 7. 5). He is one of the gods who assure the birth of a male child (SGS. 1. 17). Indra granted to women the boon of having children (elaboration of the story that they assumed his guilt when he slew the son of Tvaṣṭṛ, Vās. 5. 7). As was to be expected from a god of fertility, Indra shows his power in the human race as well as in the vegetable world. He gives children and crops. When others are associated with him, for he is by no means unique in this regard, it is profitable to study the group. For example, when the plow is first started, there is a group of spirits to whom sacrifice should be made to insure a good harvest. The group consists first of all of Indra; then of his companion spirits, the Maruts; then of his epic double, Parjanya; then of the Aśani, the personified lightning-bolt of Indra; and finally of the genius of getting (and begetting), Bhaga, who in the Rig-Veda is synonymous with Indra (see below). At the same time sacrifice is made to other rural deities, such as the Furrow (Sitā; Gobh. GS. 4. 4. 28). In short, it is no exaggeration to say that, to the householder of the age immediately following that called Vedic, Indra is virtually a god of fertility and nothing more.

The Vedic period differs only in this, that while it presents Indra as god of fertility it dwells also upon his warlike, crushing power, so that he is invoked not only to give fertility and virility, but to destroy it in the case of enemies (e. g. AV. 6. 138. 2). Instances of the former abound. Thus in the magic-mongering Atharva, to back up a charm magically potent to produce virility through an herb, Indra is invoked with the words, ‘O Indra, controller of bodies, put virility into him’

(AV. 4. 4. 4). Or, to get a wife, a man entreats Indra, to procure a wife for him with his golden hook, which drags in all sorts of good things (as in the Rig-Veda), while, conversely, Indra is also invoked to provide a husband for a girl (ib. 2. 36. 6.). He is entreated as giver of virility to bestow the power of the goat, the ram, and the bull; and as giver of power he also bestows long life and puts power into the plants (e. g. AV. 4. 19. 8). It is reasonable to suppose that all this hangs together with the fact that Indra is regent of the early spring (Indranakṣatra is Phalguni, SB. 2. 1. 2. 11), when weddings are in order (AV. 14. 1. 13; possibly, as Hillebrandt suggests, with the belief that Indra is son of the New Year, ib. 3. 10. 13).

In the Rig-Veda, Indra is the close companion of the rain-gods who cannot represent the occasional showers of winter but, with accompaniment of lightning and storm, portray or are the storms of summer, as their sire, the later Śiva, Vedic Rudra, is also god of summer-time. Several books call him especially *marutvat* and *marudgana*, even when Indra is not particularly invoked along with the Maruts. It is only the inner similarity which has united these originally separate elements. Indra had at first nothing to do with the Maruts, who belong to Rudra; but they and their acts are so Indra-like that even the phraseology employed to describe them is that employed to describe the god who has adopted them.

As *dhúnir múnir va(iva)* describes them (7. 56. 8), so Indra is addressed, ‘A storm god, thou (*dhúnir Indra*) hast let out the stormy waters which are like rivers’ (*sīrā*, as in 4. 19. 8; 10. 49. 9). Indra here expressly lets out stormy waters which are (not rivers but) ‘like rivers’ (1. 174. 9). These are the waters referred to as *devis*, *svarvatis*, ‘heavenly’ (1. 173. 8; 3. 32. 6; 5. 2. 11; 8. 40. 10 f.; cf. 10. 63. 15). In the last passage, Indra and the Maruts together are invoked for weal in respect to the waters in the heavenly, *svarvati*, place, and for weal in begetting sons. He is the virile one (or ram, *vṛṣṇi*) who leads this herd of Maruts and wins the waters for man and storms out the ‘cows’ for them. When he gets excited not even heaven and earth together can overpower him (1. 10. 2, 8). He goes between them in the atmosphere what time he seizes the wealth of the hills (1. 51. 2). Now the Maruts themselves fly over the ridges of the hills and are evidently givers of cloud-water, since they darken the sky and flood the earth along with ‘water-bring-

ing Parjanya' (1. 38. 8 f.; 5. 58. 3; 8. 46. 18, *vrstím junanti*, etc.). In these passages they are said to urge on and let out the rain. They are themselves the 'bulls of the sky' and they let the water stream from the sky as they are entreated, in the very words addressed to Indra, for seed and children (*tokám pusyema tānayam* (1. 64. 6 and 14; see below)). Like Indra, the Maruts in the first passage are like lions and elephants in their roaring and fury, and they are said to bring out, as it were, a strong horse *mihé*, to let out water, an expression we shall meet again used of Indra.

It is by no means a negligible fact that, on the other hand, Indra is entreated to let out the waters, 'life-giving, Marut-accompanied' (1. 80. 4). The poet who says this was thinking of the waters just described given by the Maruts and says at the same time that Indra blows the dragon from the sky as well as from the earth, *vrtrám jaghantha nír diváh: marútvatír apáh*. It is impossible to maintain that Indra in the Rig-Veda is not a giver of rain or to confine the possible cases where he gives rain to the passages where rain is mentioned by its prose name. 'Marut-accompanied water' is rain, as a dozen passages prove. Like Indra, the Maruts also 'split the rock' (*parvatam*, 1. 85. 10) and pierce the demons with lightning (1. 86. 9). The sustenance which they stream to man is called *is* (as is that of Indra). They rend the hills; they dance and sing (2. 34. 8; 5. 52. 9, 12); he and they bestow cattle, horses, cars, heroes, perhaps gold (3. 30. 20; 5. 57. 7). As bulls they make tremble mountains, earth, and trees, yet bring healing waters as medicine for ills (8. 20. 5 f.). They are said to be 'in close connection with Indra' (*sámmislā índre*, 1. 166. 11). The sap or sustenance, *is*, which Indra 'found in the endless stone' is identical with the 'treasure of the sky' (1. 130. 3) and is one with the *is* distributed by the Maruts (above). This treasure, *nidhi*, is then again the *diváh kóśah* ('treasure of the sky') mentioned as having been found by the Maruts, when they 'loosen Parjanya' and send the treasure of rain to earth (5. 53. 6). Thus at all points the activity of the Maruts agrees with that of Indra. The treasure is rain,¹ rain is the sap or sustenance, the sustenance is sent by Indra and by the Maruts. Moreover, the dragon 'stems the sky' before being slain by Indra, whose bolt

¹ In 10. 42. 2, 7, Indra himself as treasure gives grain and cows.

makes the two worlds shudder with its loud sound (2. 11. 9), where the same word is used to describe the sound as is used of Parjanya when thundering (*kánikradat stanáyan*, 5. 83. 9). So of Indra it is said, as of the Maruts (above), that he sends gifts of horses and cows when he thunders (*stanáyan*, 6. 44. 12). Compare (8. 6. 40), ‘The bull with the bolt has roared in the sky,’ of Indra thundering. For, though an atmospheric god, as is shown by his thunder and the bluster which ‘makes the woods roar’ (1. 54. 5), he yet ‘touches the sky’ (1. 23. 2), as he rushes along with the Wind-god, whose close companion he is. Thus it is with Wind that Indra conquers (4. 21. 4) and hence he shares the morning-sacrifice with Wind (4. 46-48; cf. 7. 90. 6). The two are invoked together (1. 2. 4; 135. 7), and it is with the horses of Wind that Indra brings death to Susña (1. 175. 4). Indra ‘yokes the two horses of the Wind-god,’ as if to imply that Indra’s two steeds were identical with the winds (10. 22. 4), as is actually stated in Väl. 2. 8: ‘With the horses of the Wind thou puttest to silence the demons and goest about the bright sky.’ Hence it is that Indra is said to ‘extend the rain as if from the sky’ (8. 12. 6). The frequent adverb ‘down’ is also to be noticed in connection with his sending, though this might apply to the downward course of rivers as well as of rain. Yet 8. 54. 8 is significant: ‘Let thy constant favor drip down’ (*ní tośaya*), alluding to the sap (rain) mentioned in the preceding verse. Indra climbs on the back of the tottering demon and hews downward at him with his bolt, and this too may be more than the downward stroke of any bestriding victor. It seems to imply, with the many parallel cases of ‘smiting down’ (1. 80. 5; 2. 17. 5; 5. 29. 4; etc.), what is explicitly said in 3. 31. 8: ‘From the sky shining’ he frees his friends from shame. For such explicit statements are not isolated: ‘High in air he stood and then cast his bolt at Vṛtra; clothed in mist he attacked him and sharp was his weapon,’ followed by the invocation, ‘Cast down from the sky above, O Indra, the stone wherewith thou joying wilt burn the foe; for the getting of seed and many children and cows make us thy party’ (2. 30. 3, 5; 6. 44. 18). Indra is the ‘celestial giver of cows,’ *divákṣas* (3. 30. 21), and it is probable that the (virtually identical) word *dyukṣá* is to be taken in the same sense in 5. 39. 2, ‘Bring us, O Indra, whatever thou thinkest desirable in heaven’ (alternative, ‘brilliant’). Like the Maruts (above)

Indra is frequently described as the 'dancer' or dancing god (1. 130. 7; 2. 22. 4; etc.), who 'joys in the seat of the sun' and drinks Soma as soon as he is born, in the highest heaven (3. 32. 10; 34. 7; 51. 3 f.). A more than usually brilliant description of him, which accords ill with the interpretation that he is a giant of the mountains of earth, says that Indra 'is the dancing god who, clothed in perfumed garments, golden-cheeked rides on his golden car' (6. 29. 2 f.), as the Maruts are clothed (5. 55. 6) and otherwise appear in the same golden glory.

It is now time to make the application of these data. Professor Hillebrandt, whose thesis is that Indra's sphere of activity is diametrically opposed to that of the Maruts, the latter operating in summer and Indra in spring or when the winter begins to pass, has endeavored to offset the community of Indra and the Maruts by showing that some families do not invoke the Maruts and Indra together (as one group) so often as do other families. But this is no adequate explanation of the phenomena, which show that in all the points enumerated above the field of activity and process of accomplishment are identical. It is quite impossible to separate Indra and the Maruts as representing activities belonging to different times of the year. The only point which could be proved by the fact that one clan does not besing Indra and the Maruts conjointly (though there is no such clan) is that some clans have seen that the two divinities (Marut and Indra) are practically one in their performances and some have refused to see it or have refused to bend to the syncretistic tendency. As a matter of fact, no clan omits to conjoin them; only some clans join them more closely and speak of the union more often, either in action or at sacrifice. If, as Hillebrandt thinks, the Maruts are in origin Manes, there may have been good reason for the unwillingness of some and the willingness of others to associate Indra with them or them with Indra. More important than the relative frequency with which clans more or less adverse to the Indra-cult admitted him and the Maruts to a joint sacrifice is the fact that Indra's own home clan, the Kuśikas, fully endorse the intimacy. They who know him best, whose pet god Indra is, are the very ones who group the Maruts with him. Still more important is the fact that apart from clan-predilection the description of even the clans which do not favor this grouping shows (as explained above) that it is idle to sunder the Maruts as summer-gods from Indra as late-winter

or spring-god. Even the Bharadvājas, who Hillebrandt shows do not favor the sacrificial community of the two, speak several times of Indra as accompanied by the Maruts (6. 19. 11; 40. 5; 47. 5). They admit also that the Maruts strengthen Indra (6. 17. 11), and their identification of the *deva ratha* with Indra's bolt and the Maruts' van also connects them closely (6. 47. 28), especially in view of the fact that the 'Maruts' van' is elsewhere apparently identified with Indra's 'sharp weapon,' the bolt (8. 96. 9).

Similarly, the Vasiṣṭhas, though rarely uniting Indra and the Maruts, yet show full acquaintance with the fact that if one has 'Indra and the Maruts' as his helpers, he will become rich in cows (7. 32. 10), and they pray that the 'accompanying roar of the Maruts' shall encompass Indra as he comes with his lightning (7. 31. 8, *sahá dyúbhīḥ*; for the roar, cf. 2. 11. 7 f.). Even the Atris speak of Indra as the wise seer of the Maruts (5. 29. 1) and the Gr̥tsamadas at least group the Maruts with Indra and Vāyu as common benefactors (2. 11. 14). Evidently Indra, however apart or shared be his victory, is recognized everywhere as coming at the same time with the Maruts, whose 'friend' he is (8. 36. 2, as *apsujit*; cf. ib. 76. 1 f.). The *śárdho marútām* rejoice in Indra (ib. 15. 9), whether they fight with him or not, and the prevailing opinion of the Rig-Veda, no one opposing, is that they are his band, *gana*, that Indra gave them a share of Soma (3. 35. 9), and that all beings have bent before (*yemire*) Indra since the Marut clans have bent down (*nīyemiré*) before him (8. 12. 29).² There is certainly not the slightest indication that they are active in different seasons, and since Hillebrandt admits that the Rudra-Maruts are summer-time gods, it follows that Indra is a god of the same season, even if the phenomena accompanying both, driving winds, rending lightning, loosening the waters and 'cows,' shaking the hills, and roaring 'music,' were not identical.

As Indra stands in the air, so he is represented as 'blowing the great snake (the dragon) out of the air' (atmosphere, *nír antáriksāt*, 8. 3. 20) and as 'shooting from the sky' (10. 89. 12). Rain is his herd (10. 23. 4). The waters which he lets out come up 'from the south day after day, going without cessation to their goal,' and it is these monsoon-waters which

² Compare 8. 89. 2; 98. 3.

Indra collects and gives as his unceasing gift (6. 32. 5). His bolt is variously represented as a stone or a club of a hundred knots or an arrow or a spear or simply as a missile. It lightens, it burns, it smashes down, it gleams as a hot bolt—and yet the modern mythologist believes that it is ‘only a club’ and a club does not imply a bolt of lightning!³ As a clinching argument we are reminded that Mithra also carries a club and Jupiter with his bolt is not a rain-god! Surely ‘Zeus rains,’ and Jupiter Pluvialis, also Elicius (cf. *aquaelicium*), gives rain. As for Mithra, his own hymn says that he ‘makes the waters flow and the plants grow.’ Mithra too has a club with a hundred edges and with it he ‘smites the Daevas,’ while with his arrows he lets out water. So Mithra and Jupiter both show what a club as a bolt may do.⁴

Before Fire became a mere sacrificial horse, burdened with a load of offerings, he was an averter of demons, a function still retained in the Rig-Veda: ‘Burn, O Agni, all the demons; protect us from the curse’ (1. 76. 3). In the same way Indra is ‘begotten as demon-slayer’; he smites the demons or burns them with his missile (1. 129. 11; 6. 18. 10, *heti*), as he burns the foe or ‘burns down on high the *dasyus* out of heaven’ (6. 22. 8; 1. 33. 4, 7), so that he appears to be lightning itself (*divyévāśánir jahi*, 1. 176. 3). Of course, Indra is not lightning, but when he is asked to ‘burn demons as fire burns wood’ (6. 18. 10), there is no doubt that the poet is right in saying that he is like lightning. The use of stone and metal as synonymous with missile and arrow seems to bar out the suggestion that Indra’s normal weapon might be burning sun-beams, though he may employ them (8. 12. 9)⁵ when he becomes so great

³ *asánim tápitsthām . . tápusim hetím* (3. 30. 16 f.); *śárvā* (2. 12. 10); *tanyatúm* = *vájram* (1. 52. 6); *asánim* (1. 54. 4); ‘thou who begottest gleaming lightnings from the sky,’ *didýúto diváh*, (2. 13. 7), etc., etc. Compare 1. 52. 15, the edged club, *bhr̥stimátā vadhéna*; of metal (1. 80. 12); *sṛkám pavím* (10. 180. 2).

⁴ When Tibullus says *arida nec Pluvio supplicat herba Iovi* (1. 7), he means that in Italy the dry vegetation begs Jupiter for rain. Apropos of this, Pausanias says that there was an (Attic) ‘statue of Earth beseeching Zeus to rain.’

⁵ In the same hymn (8. 12. 30) Indra is said to ‘hold the sun in the sky,’ which opposes the idea that the poet regards him as one with the sun. In 10. 171. 4, Indra even transports the sun across the sky. Yet the

that he is regarded as like Agni or the sun, or even as begetting the sun. In 1. 133, a priest is employed in ‘burning away’ the various ‘un-Indra demons’ and invokes Indra as ‘stone-holder’ to ‘smash’ them, obviously not with sun-beams but with that bolt, ‘like a sharp knife,’ with which ‘as with an axe’ he breaks down trees (1. 130. 4; cf. 10. 73. 8, ‘upturns the trees’).

Indra indubitably lets out rivers, but this is no argument against his letting out rain. Varuna also ‘goes over earth’ (10. 75. 2) when he ‘lets out the rivers.’ Varuna too ‘let out the floods of rivers’ (7. 87. 1), though he and Mitra also let out rain (5. 63. 1 f.). When therefore Indra is said to let out rivers and to dig a path for them (10. 89. 7, etc.), it no more implies that he is not a giver of rain also than, when Varuna is said to let out rivers, this god by implication is restricted to river-freeing. Indra’s strength is collected ‘in the sky’ (1. 80. 13) and his ‘metal stone’ (bolt) is hurled ‘from the sky’ (1. 121. 9).

That food is implicit in the rain and sap appears to be the case from the way in which the ‘swelling of the sap’ is connected with invocation for food. Thus Indra is besought to ‘make visible the sun, penetrate to the cows (or food-strength) and (at this time) to make the sap swell’ (6. 17. 2-3; cf. 8. 103. 5 and 10. 74. 4, of worshipers who wish to pierce to the cows or cow-stall). The swelling is obviously of the cloud-sap when it is said that the bull of the Aśvins, the cloud (*megha*), swelled (1. 181. 8) and apparently of Indra’s waters when the god is represented as rushing like the wind, and the (his) waters swell and he is then described as ‘the only one among the gods who divides with mortals’ (*dayase*, 7. 23. 4-5; cf. 10. 147. 5, as ‘distributor’). So Indra is ‘distributor of food, lord of people, king of the world’ (6. 36. 1-4). The full expression ‘let swell the sap’ is peculiarly Indra’s (1. 63. 8), ‘let the sundry kinds of strength-giving sap swell like water’ (perhaps, with Ludwig, of earthly food); so of Indra or of his Maruts is used the phrase

explanation of 8. 12. 9, though it is here said that he has grown great when he burns with the sun’s rays, may be that Indra operates in general with the sun’s rays on the principle of the Śruti given by Sāyaṇa at 7. 36. 1: ‘Parjanya rains with the sun’s rays’ (see below). For Indra as one with the sun, compare 4. 23. 6 and 8. 93. 4. Such cases appear to belong to the later not to the earlier part of the Rig-Veda, new creations, not remnants of an older belief, as they should be, were Indra first the sun.

dhukṣásva pipyúsīm iṣam (8. 13. 25); *iṣam jaritré nadyò ná pipeḥ* (Indra, 4. 16. 21; cf. 6. 35. 4); of Maruts, *dhukṣánta pipyúsīm iṣam*, ‘milk out the rich sap’ (8. 7. 3).⁶

Indra in 1. 57. 6 shatters the ‘great rock’ when he lets out the waters, and in 6. 17. 5 he moves from its place the ‘great rock which surrounds the cows.’ In this parallel, not to speak of the neighboring 1. 56. 6, in which Indra rends apart the *pāsyā* of Vrtra (which, *pace* Oldenberg, seems to be stone-work), the cows appear to be the waters for which men long to break open ‘the stall full of cows’ (10. 74. 4; but cf. Oldenberg, ZDMG. 55. 316 f.). At any rate, we have here an example of the interpretation of Indra as still a physical phenomenon operating with metaphorical cows as contrasted with a spiritual victor-god who, as in the ‘cow-getting’ of 10. 38. 1, is virtually a god of battles assisting a cow-raider (cf. *goṣuyúdh*) to carry off his neighbor’s cattle. That ‘cows’ always are bossies in the Rig-Veda is impossible. In whatever way such remarks as that above concerning Indra’s activity in removing the rock round the cows may be interpreted, the cows are not domestic cattle, as they are when a real cow-stall is mentioned (1. 191. 4, etc.). In 5. 30. 4, for example, the cows found by Indra are not cattle and the rock he rends is probably the same rock as that above, or that of ib. 45. 1. In the light of the constant statement that the dragon encompasses *waters*, how can the expression, ‘I am Indra; I brought out *cows* from the dragon’ (10. 48. 2) be set aside in favor of the literal interpretation?

Through persistent weakening of the original meaning the translators of Vedic passages ignore some significant words in connection with Indra. The etymology of *megha*, ‘cloud,’ as water-giver is known to be from *mih* (‘mingo’; cf. *mihé* above). The verb in its later form *mih* is common enough, but in its older form, and thereby conserving its earlier meaning of letting out water, it is used only of the raining-down Maruts and of raining-down Indra (*níméghamāna*, ‘day by day as thou pourest down rain thou assumest strength,’ 8. 4. 10; of the Maruts, 2. 34. 13, ‘raining down with power’). The weaker root appears in

⁶ In 2. 27. 14 f., following an invocation to Indra it is said: ‘for him two worlds swell the rain from heaven . . . both worlds he goes conquering.’ On account of 5. 37. 4, it is doubtful what the original construction and reference may have been (Ludwig omits ‘Indra’).

the standing sense of ‘spending,’ and so ‘generous,’ ‘merciful,’ and in this weaker sense applies to sundry gods. Again it is significant that the word *mehánā*, translated ‘in a stream’ and so ‘abundantly,’ may really be taken literally, ‘with rain.’ So 5. 38. 3, Indra’s powers (Maruts?) ‘follow his wish with rain’; ib. 39. 1, ‘give us the two hands full of that blessing which you bestow with rain’ (i. e. in streams). The gift or blessing here can be no other blessing than that usually expected of Indra. In 8. 63. 12, the companions of Indra, the Rudras, are said to be present with rain, *mehánā*. Only in the *dānastuti* of 8. 4. 21 is it probable that the weaker sense, ‘abundantly,’ is to be accepted. Indra is *mehánāvat* in 3. 49. 3, ‘der reichlich regen strömende,’ as Ludwig rightly translates (PW. ‘reichlich spendend’; 2. 24. 10, of Br̥haspati, the priestly form of Indra). It is at least curious that, if the word is rightly rendered only in its secondary sense of ‘giving freely,’ it should be confined, among all the freely giving gods, to Indra and his associates.

A word here also regarding another derivative of this root, *mīh*, ‘rain’ or ‘mist.’ When the Maruts in 8. 7. 4-5, are said to make the mountain and the rivers bow to their power, they ‘cast rain and make the hills totter,’ *vápanti Marúto mīham, prá vepayanti párvatān*. When Indra attacks his foe he is said to ‘cast forth dark *mīhah* and darkness’ (10. 73. 5). Veiled in *mīh* Indra attacks Vṛtra (2. 30. 3). The same use occurs in 1. 79. 2, *pátanti mīhah*, perhaps ‘rains fall, clouds thunder’ (‘es fliegen die dunstmassen,’ Ludwig). The Maruts may make mist (*mīham kṛṇvanti*, 1. 38. 7, ‘windless’ in this instance). Sāyana, probably correctly, interprets ‘the child of *mīh*, long and broad, the Maruts urge forth’ as rain (1. 37. 11). The verb used here is that employed to indicate the urging or stirring forth of Indra himself when metaphorically called the ‘treasure’ and to indicate the activity of the Maruts in sending out the treasure of the sky, or rain (5. 53. 6; 83. 8; 10. 42. 2). The same phrase used of Indra’s activity, *kóśam acucyavít* (8. 72. 8), especially as filled out with *diváh*, means that Indra has sent rain from the sky (poured out the treasure-pot).

Indra’s ‘fiery rain’ (or mist) may be dangerous and so it is not strange when a hymnist begs to be kept safe from it (3. 31. 20). Here we come to the explanation of what has puzzled the commentators, how Indra can be said to slay the serpentine (undulating) demon Arbuda with coolness, *hiména*. The foes

of Indra include not only the dragon or great snake Vrtra, but also Śuṣṇa and Arbuda. The former is called a child of the mist, as Vṛtra is veiled in mist as well as Indra (1. 32. 13; 5. 32. 4) and as his regular epithet is *aśúṣa*, ‘devouring,’ Śuṣṇa is most reasonably interpreted (*pace* the euheremists) as devouring drought. Another epithet, *kúyava*, ‘bad harvest’ (barley), the meaning of which is tolerably certain from its use in VS. 18. 10 f., is an appellation of Śuṣṇa or at times an independent personality. Indra ‘tears the encircling well-knotted power of the drought-demon (Śuṣṇa) from the sky’ (*divás pári*, 1. 121. 10), after the demon had left the people no food (caused a famine) and so slays him, the great demon, Druh, as he is expressly called, or, as elsewhere stated, the ‘not human’ adversary (6. 20. 4 f.; cf. 4. 28. 2 and 10. 22. 7, 14), as Indra slays all who are born of him. Another passage says expressly that Indra ‘made flow the springs restrained by the season through killing Śuṣṇa, the child of mist’ (5. 32. 2 f.). That Indra is said to have killed this demon for the sake of his devotee Kutsa Ārjuneya is on a par with the fact that he slays the eclipse-demon for the sake of his devotee Atri. Śuṣṇa’s ‘fortress’ is the same ‘movable city,’ *púram cariṣṇvām . . sám piṇak* (8. 1. 28), which the later Hindus ascribe to the Gandharvas. In some passages Śuṣṇa even exchanges with Vrtra.⁷ There can be as little doubt in regard to the demoniac nature of one as of the other. What we learn from Śuṣṇa is that Indra’s foe is not only the demon that restrains the water but also drought itself. Now drought or dryness (as *súṣṇa* is) is slain rather by rain than by lightning. Lightning may pierce the cloud and split it, so that it disgorges water, but the water itself destroys the dryness, though the processes are not always distinguished. But the fact that what is cool and wet may be used or spoken of as a weapon is of importance because it explains how Indra ‘wounds Arbuda with coolness’ (8. 32. 26, *himénā ’vidhyad Árbudam*). Hillebrandt’s interpretation, ‘in the winter,’ is a desperate attempt

⁷ Compare Hillebrandt, *Ved. Myth.* 3, p. 290. Kúyava as epithet of Śuṣṇa may become a separate demon by a well-established mythological tendency. The human aspect given to Kúyava in 1. 104 is quite illusive. His two wives ‘bathe in milk’ while the devout mortal cannot even get water and is hungry. The mortal prays that the wives of the demon may be destroyed in the depth of his local river, that is, that Indra may send water enough to drown the demon crew.

to annul the absurdity of a sun-god killing with cold weather. But the use of *hiména* elsewhere shows that it is not winter but coolness. The Aśvins regularly employ this means to alleviate the extreme heat, *gharmá*, with which Atri was encompassed (e. g. 8. 73. 3). Consequently Indra may well be said to destroy with the coolness of the mist and darkness and rain (above) of his approach the serpent of drought and dryness.⁸

But we are not left to induction in regard to the Vedic view of Indra. One would think from the utterances of those who, like Gruppe, knowing the less of the subject, are the more forward in expressing their opinion, that it was actually open to question whether Indra to the Vedic poets themselves was a deity who gave rain. Even Bergaigne, who, despite his bias, knew his Rig-Veda, adjudges worthy of only a negligent note the important passage in 4. 26. 2, because forsooth not Indra but a poet is speaking (Bergaigne 2. 185). Yet here we have an impersonator who poses so palpably as Indra that all the rest of the description but echoes Vedic expressions: 'I gave the earth to the Aryan; I (gave) rain to the devout mortal; I fetched the sounding waters; the gods followed my will; with joy I split apart the nine and ninety forts of Śambara.' Very emphatic this *ahám*, no other than I ('Indra) gave rain. Compare (above), Indra 'extends the rain abroad as from the sky,' *vr̥stím pratháyan* (8. 12. 6).⁹ Indra is not, like Parjanya, personified rain-cloud; he gives rain, Parjanya is rain. The Maruts rain also, as servants or companions of Indra, or independently, themselves pouring down rain. He who is a general fertility-dæmon gives rain as one of his functions.

⁸ The undulations of intense heat actually appear visible in the air. Arbuda is *arṇavá*, 'billowy.' Indra stamps on him and cuts off his head in other passages (*árбуда* = *арбуда*; 1. 51. 6; 10. 67. 12). There is no one manner of slaying demons. Even Vṛtra, who swallows the waters, is represented as swallowed by Indra, perhaps when the demon is 'asleep' (3. 45. 2; 4. 17. 1; 19. 3; 10. 111. 9). Vṛtra like Indra is so huge that he embraces heaven and earth (8. 6. 16 f.). The foes of Indra use his own weapons occasionally (e. g. 1. 80. 12 f.).

⁹ Śambara's overthrow is invariably attributed to Indra, who slays him in the fortieth autumn in the mountains, as also Indra disperses Rāuhina with his bolt as he climbs the sky and the mountains fear his power (2. 12. 11 f.), here as 'the bull of seven rays,' an epithet that has worked back to him from the 'lord of power' (4. 50. 4) conception, originally Agni's.

Indra is a growing god in the Rig-Veda. Belonging originally to the Kuśika and Gotama clans,¹⁰ he was rather reluctantly accepted by others, but chiefly as by the Bharadvājas as a battle-god. He is not a giant of the mountains, as represented by some scholars, but a cosmic giant, whose greatness surpasses the sky-greatness of Varuna, the favorite inherited god of the Vasiṣṭhas. He not only encompasses Varuṇa as sky, but embraces earth and sky and stretches beyond (1. 61. 9; 6. 30. 1 f.), the first crude conception of an all-god expressed materialistically as an all-embracing god, whose rule or will (as declared in the verse above) the gods follow, or, as said elsewhere, even Varuṇa and the sun follow (1. 101. 3).¹¹ The ‘fist of Indra’ is a term applied to a drum, obviously because its sound resembles Indra’s thunder, not because it indicates size. It is used to frighten away demons (6. 47. 30).

In these different aspects of fertility Indra as giver of rain comes nearest to the Maruts and Parjanya (‘like rainy Parjanya,’ 8. 6. 1). He thunders, gives rain, casts the dragon from the air, sends a sharp and gleaming bolt to earth. His waters are heavenly, and as such they are seven, or nine and ninety streams, which are let loose not only for man’s sake but for the gods (10. 104. 8). At the same time he indubitably lets out the streams of earth from the mountain, as no mere sun-god does. His relation to Soma is not merely that of the god drinking an intoxicant which rouses his strength. The Soma-drops pouring through the sieve are utilized by a kind of sympathetic magic to induce Indra to rain: ‘Enter into thy friend (Indra), O Soma, and let rain come from the sky’ (9. 8. 7). Indra and Soma are thus identified,¹² as (9. 5. 9) Indra is identified with the lord of progeny and the creative Tvaṣṭṛ, who like Indra creates all things and gives children (2. 3. 9; 3. 55. 19).

As giver of rain ‘from the sky’ Indra is united with Pūṣan, the god of fertility and general prosperity, who, like other Vedic

¹⁰ 1. 10. 11; 3. 30. 20; 42. 9; 50. 4; 4. 32. 9. Compare 10. 43. 6, (Indra) ‘embraced one clan after another.’

¹¹ For Indra’s size compare e. g. 1. 52. 14. In 3. 32. 11 and 8. 4. 8 f., Indra is so great that he covers earth with one hip, perhaps thought of here as a god enveloping earth with rain, after his angry or raging form has passed: ‘his gift no longer rages’ (*ná dānō asya roṣati*); in the following verse (10) he is *nimēghamānah*, ‘raining down.’

¹² In 6. 39. 3 the poet gives Soma the credit for Indra’s acts.

gods, has been interpreted as sun and as moon with equal success. But a more intimate relationship than that of rain-giver (3. 57. 2) is revealed in that aspect of Indra which arrests the attention in the ritual and in the Rig-Veda alike. It will be remembered that in later literature Indra is the husband, *pati*, of the furrow, *Sitā*, or of the fallow field, *urvarā-pati*, and as such (as god of fertility) receives most of the homage of later times. But in the Rig-Veda also Indra is *urvarāpati* (lord or husband of the fallow field). He wins tilth, is lord of tilth, as he is lord of cattle (2. 21. 1; 6. 20. 1; 8. 21. 3). And as such he is begged to 'sink the furrow,' as Pūṣan guides it (4. 57. 7). No other Vedic god is so intimately connected with this form of fertility. Indra is lord of plants and of grain as he lightens from the sky, *didyúto diváh*, and extends the streams. He lets out the tender shoots; spreads blossoms over the fields; he bestows plants and trees (2. 13. 7; 3. 34. 10); he lets the trees grow (10. 138. 2). For this reason more than for his prowess against foes he is said to be the god who distributes 'enjoyments and growths'; he extracts 'dry sweet from wet'; he lays his treasure in the sun (compare the waters in the sun, 1. 23. 17) and as master of life is called the only owner of all (2. 13. 6). The treasure laid in the sun must be the treasure of the sky, which, as shown above, is Indra's rain. It is the idea familiar to the epic writers. Indra sends down rain; it is drawn up by the sun and kept as a treasure in the sky from circa October till June and then Indra pours it down again for four months. It is the Maruts who 'bring the seed-corn' (5. 53. 13). According to 1. 52. 9, the 'man-helping Maruts' go with Indra, though they belong also to another fertilizer, Viṣṇu (5. 87. 8; 8. 20. 3), who is 'the guardian of the seed' (embryo, 7. 36. 9), and 'they give strength to beget.'

Indra's food, though eventually the Soma, which he drinks at first once a day, then thrice, as his power grows, was clearly in the first instance a more bucolic diet of grain. The completed ritual pours him full of intoxicants, though even then he is 'like a granary (filled) with barley' (2. 14. 11); but the Soma, which he is expressly said to have stolen, is always mixed with milk or (and) barley, while occasionally his food is honey, the 'sweet of bees,' and milk (2. 22. 1; 3. 42. 7; 8. 4. 8). Moreover, although the official explanation says that corn is presented to him 'for his horses,' he himself (3. 35. 3) eats corn

every day (1. 16. 2). As the companion of the Rbhus and Maruts, *ságano Marúdbhīḥ*, and of Pūṣan, the god of bucolic prosperity (fertility), whose laud is united with his own, Indra receives a kind of mush, as well as cakes and corn (3. 52. 3; 4. 32. 16).¹³ In 8. 91. 2 (like 3. 52. 1), a girl desiring maturity propitiates Indra with mush and corn-cake and drink. This mixture of corn probably preceded the Soma-drink of which Indra gradually assumed ownership, extending his share from the mid-day feast to the other two, till ‘his became all Somas’ (4. 17. 6; more insistently, ‘thine are all the Somas, first and last,’ 3. 36. 3). The corn-brew is Indra’s (3. 43. 4) and his only, except as his companions share. As god of fertility also he is the giver of food and of strength, a veritable ‘Bhaga for giving’ (Vāl. 6. 5; 3. 36. 5; 3. 49. 3). He won the fields (above) and also won for himself the plants and trees (3. 34. 10), albeit as incidental to winning the ‘heavenly waters’ and earth and sky, the cow ‘much nourishing,’ an epithet used by implication of Indra himself (*índram navā-máhe . . giríñ ná purubhójasam*, ‘we praise Indra—like a much-nourishing hill,’ 8. 88. 2, that is, on account of its streams, ib. 49. 2). The ‘nourishment’ coming from Indra is revealed clearly enough, if playfully, in the punning ode, 3. 44. 3, where *hari*, ‘yellow and green,’ is applied to all Indra’s phenomena including heaven and earth,¹⁴ and the god is said to go between heaven and earth and hold the nourishment of heaven and of earth. For earth also ‘brings him much wealth, and the sky and the plants and the trees and waters guard wealth for him’

¹³ In 8. 17. 12, *ākhandala*, *śáci*, *śácipūjana*, *śáci*, according to VS. 23. 8, would be groats (cf. *pustigu*, as name). Indra also eats oxen and buffaloes (5. 29. 7; 8. 12. 8, etc.), not to speak of dogs and wolves (4. 18. 13; 10. 73. 3; for ‘many are the foods of the rite,’ 4. 23. 8). Viṣṇu is sent off like a servant and fetches to Indra, apparently as food, a boar and a cake and a hundred buffaloes (8. 77. 10). With Viṣṇu Indra enjoys the barley-mixture (2. 22. 1; cf. 6. 17. 11; 8. 3. 7). Indra drinks also with Pūṣan and his wife (1. 82. 6) and is apparently identified with Pūṣan (8. 4. 15). He represents Varuṇa and Pūṣan (? 6. 24. 5): ‘Indra performs this to-day and that to-morrow; he realizes the non-existent; he is here the overpower of hostile wishes, Mitra to us, Varuna, Pūṣan.’

¹⁴ Hence a certain resemblance of Indra and the Sun, both of whom are ‘yellow-haired.’ So Indra’s yellow steeds are, *quā* yellow, ‘two banners of the sun’ (2. 11. 6).

(3. 51. 5), so that he is entreated to shake down this saving wealth for the worshiper (3. 45. 4). He makes his worshiper wealthy because he is a god who, ‘shattering, like Dyaus with the thunderbolt,’ gives his gift of life-strength (4. 17. 13, 18), or, as expressed elsewhere, gives virility to him who roasts corn for the god as well as presses Soma or cooks for him (4. 24. 7; cf. 5). So repeatedly Indra is said to be the sole master of strength and as such is begged to give much sap, strength as food (4. 32. 7).

But the varied benefits bestowed by Indra and the Maruts alike are not confined to rain. As we saw above, the Maruts are invoked with the prayer ‘May we live long and prosper in children and posterity,’ *tokám pūṣyema tánayam śatám himāḥ* (1. 64. 14). So Indra is invoked (1. 100. 11 = 6. 44. 18; cf. 6. 18. 6 and 19. 12) for ‘children, cows, and water.’ To these, as in the last passage, is added ‘land,’ or more particularly ‘fallow fields’ (cf. 6. 25. 4); since the Bharadvājas accept Indra more as a war-lord and their petition is extended to all that they desire, even including a place in the sun, as in 6. 31. 1, where the usual cows of this formula are replaced by ‘sun.’¹⁵ In sundry variations the *toké tánaye* formula is usually employed in connection with Indra, though not confined to him. But it is interesting to see that another rain-god, Varuna, is invoked for the same purpose, withal together with Indra, ‘for children and fields’ (and ‘the sight of the sun,’ 4. 41. 6); but especially does the hymn to them ask ‘help to children’ (*toké tánaye*, 7. 84. 5). Other gods who are asked for children are begged to send the impulse (Savitr, 4. 53. 7; 5. 82. 4) or to ‘rouse’ or ‘impel’ a man to the getting of fields and children (e. g. the Aśvins, 1. 112. 22; Bṛhaspati, 2. 23. 9); but the particular prayer for water, children, cows, and fields is addressed only to Indra or to Indra’s inspiring Soma (9. 91. 6); as the finding of cows, horses, plants, water, and trees is attributed to Indra alone (1. 103. 5; cf. 6. 39. 5). ‘Earth and water he got for man’ (2. 20. 7); ‘he won the field, the sun, the waters,’ when he slew the enemy with his arrow (1. 100. 18).

¹⁵ The verse with its striking *carsanáyo vivācaḥ* is virtually repeated in 6. 33. 2, with *śurasātau* for *süre*. The temptation to read *śure*, for *süre*, is met, however, by 1. 104. 6, where Indra is begged for a ‘share of water and sun’ (ib. 7, ‘give strength and life to us who are hungry’).

In all this there is a mixture of the earlier and persistent element, Indra as god of fertility, and the secondary, Indra as Mars. He causes the production of children and he wins fields and wealth as victor in battle, the leader, path-maker, *gópati*, lord of cows, who even guards the cows from the missile, *heti*, of Rudra (6. 21. 12, *pathikṛt*; 6. 28. 3, 5, where the cows are even identified with Indra by a poet who says that his pecunia is his god). He guards from Rudra because he now governs the Rudriyas (identified with the Maruts, 3. 32. 2; 35. 9) and they are 'like his own sons' (1. 100. 5). The thought is that when Indra lets out water he 'sends forth life and food' (as strength and sustenance, *is*). He thus becomes lord of life and gradually sends, in his worshipers' opinion, not only sustenance but all good things. As contrasted with Agni, the latter is more the guardian of children and of cows (*tokásya tánaye gávām*, 1. 31. 12), fire as deterrent to demons, wild beasts, etc. But also, as heat, Agni, for obvious reasons, is said to set the embryo in all beings, vegetable and animal (10. 183. 3), while Indra grants 'the luck of progeny' (3. 30. 18) as a concomitant of his gift of food and virile power (8. 6. 23). Thus Indra and Varuna together are besought for 'progeny and prosperity' (Vāl. 11. 7). Yet of Indra also is it said, 'thou didst set the liquid in cows and plants' (10. 73. 9, *páyo góśv ádadhā ósadhiṣu*), the liquid being both milk and rain (sent by the Maruts, 5. 63. 5; cf. 4. 57. 5, *yád diví páyah*, 'sky-liquid,' rain). The fear of the poet is poverty. He cries to Agni, 'Deliver us not to poverty, nor to lack of heroes and cows,' invoking the Maruts, however, at the same time (3. 16. 5; cf. 2). Substantially the same prayer (7. 1. 19) adds 'hunger' and 'poor clothes,' to explain the concept of *ámati* (poverty); while two other prayers to the same god entreat him to keep away poverty, oppression, and ill-will (*ámati*, *durmáti*) and conjoin poverty on the part of the poet with 'curse' and evil (4. 11. 6; 8. 19. 26). Destruction and poverty, opposed to 'wealth,' are also deprecated in a prayer to the sacred tree (of sacrifice, 3. 8. 2) and in one to the press-stones (10. 76. 4), and the Ādityas in general are besought (8. 18. 11) to keep off 'the arrow, and poverty and hatred.' A prayer to Agni and Indra together begs the two gods to save from evil, the curse, and blame, and to give wealth of horses, cows, and gold (7. 94. 3, 9). Wealth of children, men, horses, and food is also besought of the Dawns (7. 75. 8); but these

sporadic prayers, in part offered by those not inclined to the Indra-cult, are few in comparison with the prayers offered to Indra to save from poverty, sometimes united with hunger (10. 42. 10, ‘may we escape poverty through cows and hunger through barley’; cf. 1. 53. 5, ‘keep off poverty through cows and horse-hold, having food, *īś*, O Indra’).¹⁶ ‘Be merciful, like a father, O Indra, for poverty, nakedness, exhaustion oppress me,’ cries another poet (10. 33. 2). How this poverty is to be relieved is explained in 5. 36. 3: ‘My mind fears poverty . . . (5) may the sky, *vṛṣā*, increase thee, *vṛṣanam*; as such a *vṛṣā*, O thou of *vṛṣa*-power, O thou who holdest the bolt, hold us in the foray.’ Here the virility of power interchanges with the more literal meaning. It is as fructifying power that Dyaus aids fructifying Indra. The curse so often alluded to in connection with the god is the curse of poverty and hunger, from which Indra frees men and the gentle Aśvins free a woman (10. 39. 6). Compare the allusion to the actual famine existing at the time the poet of 8. 66. 14 cries to Indra, ‘Free us from this present poverty and hunger,’ adding ‘and (this) curse.’ This is clearly the curse already referred to in 10. 104. 9, where Indra frees the water from the curse by letting out the streams (cf. 8. 89. 2). In the hymn referred to above (8. 91. 5) Indra is begged to induce fertility in field and woman both; he makes all things grow, even hair; he ripens the girl and makes the fallow field, *urvárvā*, blossom forth. He extracts the swelling sap for the people; in him, in fact, ‘is the life of the people’ (8. 54. 7).

Hence the festival of Indra (which appears to be a public rejoicing wherein even little children take part, and Indra himself appears as a child) with the invocation, ‘Sing, O ye children; let harp and lute and *piṅgā* sound loudly; ein’ feste Burg ist unser Gott’ (*púram ná dhrṣṇv àrcata*, 8. 69. 8; cf. 8. 80. 7)¹⁷—this festival is probably that of a god of fertility, not that of a war-god. It certainly is not as a war-god but as a god of fertility that Indra is addressed by the worshiper in 8. 78. 10: ‘In hope of thee (Indra) I take in hand the sickle; with a handful of barley fill thou me.’ His associates, the Aśvins,

¹⁶ In 10. 43. 3, ‘Indra is averse from poverty and hunger.’

¹⁷ So Indra is called ‘a hill broad on all sides, lord of the sky’ (8. 98. 4). He is represented as in the sky, in the seat of the gods, lord of the sky (8. 13. 2, 8); cf. *padám yád diví* (8. 13. 29). The Kāṇvas extol him thus especially (cf. his *kṣáyo diví*, 8. 64. 4, and cf. 69. 7).

'sow the barley and extract sap' (sustenance, 1. 117. 21). Again, they 'plough barley,' but this is 'the old barley in the sky' (8. 22. 6, *pūrvyám diví yávam*). But it is Indra who 'gives the barley' (as well as cows and horses, 1. 16. 9; 53. 2, *duró yávasya vásuna inás pátiḥ*), as harvester.

Not less important is the converse fact, that with the exception of Soma, who merely induces Indra to act, no other god is mentioned as giving barley at all. Thus in 9. 69. 8 and 55. 1, Soma is begged to 'stream barley-barley' and give gold, horse, cow, barley, and heroes to the worshiper. On the other hand, Indra gives horse, cattle, and barley, or plenty of barley and cattle in four passages; and nowhere else does any god do likewise.¹⁸

The generalized translation of virility as strength tends to shade down the aspect of Indra as giver of fertility to man. He is, so to speak, the seed-god in every respect, *divó ná yásya rétaso dúghānāḥ pánthásah . . marútvān índrah* (1. 100. 1-3; *viryéna sámokāḥ*, 6. 18. 7), the bull with bull-strength, whose paths exude, as it were, the seed of the sky. When he roused the sleeping dragon, wives and the birds (Maruts? so S.) rejoiced (1. 103. 7). Indra, here explicitly as 'heavenly ruler,' *divyáḥ śásáḥ* (cf. 6. 37. 2), is invoked to bestow 'all the brilliant virile powers of men' that the worshipers may rejoice with that mad rejoicing 'whereby we may be reckoned victorious in getting children' (6. 19. 6 f., 11; cf. 3. 47. 5). But despite the literal meaning of the words, it may be doubtful whether the bull-power is meant in just this sense. In other cases, however, there is hardly a doubt that Indra is appealed to as a productive begetting power. Thus in 3. 30. 18: 'Luck in children, O Indra, be with us.' So in 5. 31. 2, Indra gives wives to those who have none. And in a following hymn, 5. 37. 3: '(May his car come);

¹⁸ 'Barley and cattle' in 10. 42. 7 is repeated ib. 10, 'may we stifle our hunger with barley.' The list 'horses, cows, and barley' (begged of Indra in 8. 93. 3) follows the order of 1. 53. 2, and may reflect the historical gradation of petition, as barley is not begged for at all in the family-books. Probably it follows cattle as object of petition, Indra's spirit of fertility being employed first for live-stock, agriculture being more a haphazard matter. Whether *yáva* is really barley, or best translated more generally as corn, makes no great difference. It seems to be grain even in the word *yávasa*, in which cows rejoice, and later it is unquestionably barley. When *yáva* is mentioned in the family-books it is only by way of a simile. It is a specific form of the general 'corn' already spoken of as alternative to barley in Indra's corn-cake.

here a woman seeks a husband who wants to carry off a strong wife.' In 2. 16. 8, 'May we with thy good-will like bulls unite with our wives' is doubtful (perhaps, 'may we come to thy good-will, as bulls unite with their wives'). Indra is here the ever-youthful god 'without whom is nothing, in whom all virile power is collected' (ib. 1). It is apparently in the capacity of a virile bull that the poet speaks of Indra at 6. 28. 8 (*upapárcanam*): *úpa* (*prcyatām*) *rsabhásya rétasy*, *úpe* '*'ndra* *táva* *viryè* (in 5, the cows appear as incorporate Bhaga and Indra; cf. AV. 9. 4. 23); the impregnating bull is a form of Indra. As such a god perhaps he is described as having a thousand testicles (6. 46. 3) when invoked as god of strength (cf. 10. 102. 4). Yet as the weaker or generalized meaning applies also to Agni (8. 19. 32), it may so limit Indra also, even if originally intended in a more pregnant sense. Only Indra can make a barren cow give milk (4. 19. 7).

There are various indications that Indra is a more intimate god than would be a war-god or general god of rain-giving and storm. He has a peculiar interest in the welfare of the children of unmarried girls, an interest more particular than that which gives him the Marutic reputation of healer.¹⁹ He is the 'house-friend,' *dámūnas*, but this title is applied to Savitr also as energizing god, as well as to Agni, and presents him rather as friend because he 'let the shining waters flow' (3. 31. 16).²⁰ Yet in both capacities, as domestic aider and as particularly interested in girls not yet married he appears in the form of the 'little man' invoked by Apälā, who chews Soma-plant and prepares grain for him that he may make her fruitful (8. 91). Indra is especially the god who wanders about 'in many forms,' the well-known characteristic of all fertility-gods (6. 47. 18), and one shared by Agni and Rudra (*puruvárpas* only of Indra, 10. 120. 6), but only Indra makes use of it to further his love-affairs, as he alone of Vedic gods is tempted by a beautiful wife (3. 53. 6). This is the traditional interpretation of his form as a ram, and

¹⁹ In 2. 15. 7, he finds the girls' offspring hidden away (4. 19. 9, etc.). As a healer of the lame and blind he appears in 2. 13. 11; 15. 7, etc., especially as healer of hurts, wrenches, etc., *víhrutam*, the same word as is used of the Maruts, 8. 1. 12, *ískartā víhrutam púnah*; 8. 20. 26, of the Maruts, who bring all healing medicines from waters and mountains (25).

²⁰ 'He stands in the houses' (10. 73. 10) appears to be said of Indra, who 'alone knows his origin' (also like the Maruts, 7. 56. 2).

there is no reason to doubt that Indra's reputation as a gay Lothario was not established long before the Brahmanic explanation of his amours. His wife is the most lascivious of women, and he is a fit mate for her (10. 86). In the wedding verses it is he who gives many children (10. 85. 25, 45). The obscene allusion in 8. 1. 34 is fittingly added to an Indra hymn (cf. 8. 2. 42). In SB. 3. 3. 4. 18, Indra is invoked as 'ram of Medhati-thi, wife of Vṛṣanaśva, lover of Ahalyā.' Indra as ram is besung by the priests (1. 51. 1; 8. 97. 12) and comes to Medhyātithi as ram (8. 2. 40), while the Vṛṣanaśva story is recognized in the same circle (1. 51. 13). Ahalyā was wife of Kauśika or Gautama, the special worshiper of Indra, who is called Gautama (SB. ib. 19). She is explicable best as an anthropomorphized form like Sītā, *halya* meaning the land fit for plowing and *ahalyā* the as yet unplowed land. Compare *dvi-halya* = *dvi-sitya*. It is worth noting also that the later 'wonder-cow' is clearly the earth in the Rig-Veda (as was to be expected) and that she is a possession of Indra (7. 27. 4; cf. 10. 133. 7). Besides being a ram, Indra, who is usually a bull (e. g. 1. 55. 4; bull and lord in 1. 9. 4), is likened to a goat with its foot as he reaches goods to his worshiper with his long hook (8. 17. 10; 10. 134. 6). Food and children are his constant gifts (8. 6. 23 and above). Gold (4. 32. 19) and treasure-trove seem to be later additions to his store of gifts (8. 32. 9; 66. 4; 10. 48. 4). In the conception of him as a storm-god sharpening his weapon against the foe, Indra is also like a 'fearful wild beast of the mountain,' words employed as well to describe Viṣṇu (1. 154. 2; 10. 180. 2).²¹

²¹ The phrase *urū krāmiṣṭa jīvāse* also is used of Indra as well as of Viṣṇu (1. 155. 4; 8. 63. 9, 12). Apropos of the suggested derivation of Viṣṇu from *sānu*, as if the word meant 'through the mountain ridges,' it should be remembered that *vīṣṇu* is a perfectly ordinary formation, like *jīṣṇu* in RV., *dāṅkṣṇu* in VS., *bhuṣṇu* in AB., *sthāṣṇu* in the epic, and similar formations, *desṇu*, *gisṇu*, common to all the literature. The accent is no more irregular than in *Dānu*. These forms are not all accented alike, and a proper name is always apt to make a shift (*arbudā*, *Ārbuda*). Like *jēṣi jīṣṇo hitām dhānam* (6. 45. 15) we may imagine a *vēṣi Viṣṇo* more easily than the abnormal formation of *vī* with a quasi-object. The *vi-tarām*, *vī-kram* accompaniment is much more likely to have come from *Vi-sṇu* than vice versa. In any case, it is only Indra and never Viṣṇu who climbs the ridges (1. 10. 2). On the other hand, Viṣṇu is peculiarly the god of movement. Perhaps splendor is implicit, as in many

Yet the animals with which Indra is merely compared indicate only his strength or fury. Thus he is ‘like an elephant’ and ‘like a lion’ in the same verse (4. 16. 14). Metaphorically he is a steed devouring people (2. 21. 3) and winning fields, *urvarājít*, as he wins everything else, *viśvajít*, while at the same time he is the bull that does not yield and of unequaled wisdom (*ásamaṣṭakāvyah*, 2. 21. 1-4). All these differ from the animality expressed by his becoming a ram for the sake of a love-affair and by his being addressed directly as the ram, ‘Sing to the ram’ (1. 51. 1). Indra is hymned as bull or buffalo elsewhere without special allusion to the stream of life sent out by him (compare 1. 177, etc.).²²

To Indra is ascribed the only general verdict on women’s mind: *asāsyám mánah*; *utó áha krátum raghúm* (8. 33. 17), that is, according to Ludwig, women’s ‘sinn fügt der zucht sich nicht, auch ihre einsicht its gering,’ but, in the more courteous version of Grassmann, women’s sense is ‘untadelig’ and she possesses ‘rüstige Thätigkeit’! It really means that a woman is a light-minded creature whose thoughts are not to be controlled, the passage being late and to be interpreted accordingly. The only significance it has here lies in its being attributed to Indra at all, as a general proverb is attributed to the one who ought to have said it. In other words, Indra was already an expert in female lore.

A relic of the gradual rise of Indra at the expense of other gods may be seen in the statement of 7. 21. 5-7, that phallic gods are not admitted to the rite of the Vasiṣṭhas and that former gods have yielded their power to the spiritual lordship of Indra. Many passages point to the same fact. Compare 6. 36. 1, ‘When thou didst take to thyself the spirit-power of the gods’; 2. 16. 4, ‘All have brought their power to him the revered, *yajatá*, as to one who is the bull’ among gods; 4. 17. 1, ‘Earth yielded her power (matriarchal?) to thee and Dyaus admitted

words of swift motion (IF. 2. 43); but the radical idea is movement and the root *vi* or *vī*, meaning ‘go, hasten, be active,’ is in accord with the conception of the god who is especially called ‘swift’ and ‘hastening,’ *esá*, etc. It is said of the Aśvins that they go through the back of the hill (1. 117. 16), but the only connection Viṣṇu has with the *sānu* is to ‘stand on the back of the hill’ with Indra (1. 155. 1).

²² ‘When they say “he is born of a horse,” I think it means that “he is born of strength”’ (10. 73. 10).

it'; 4. 19. 2, 'As if weak with age (cf. 8. 45. 20) the gods succumbed; thou hast become (*bhúvah*) the universal lord'; 6. 22. 9, 'Thou hast become (*bhúvah*) king of divine and earthly people.' As thus exalted Indra becomes *pátiḥ diváḥ* (10. 111. 3, and above), lord of the sky; and the Vasiṣṭhas 'do not forget to praise him as an Asura' (7. 22. 5). He even becomes the god of the thirty-four heavenly lights (10. 55. 3) or gods (he divides the sky, astronomically, 10. 138. 6), the all-maker, all-god (*viśvákarmā viśvádevah*, 8. 98. 2), the universal father and mother (ib. 11), begetter of earth and sky (ib. 36. 4-5; 96. 4-6). Such exaltation in no wise lessens the aspect presented above, any more than does the occasionally exclusive laudation of Indra as a war-god and victor. The Vedic Aryans do not all yield to him at once. The worshipers of Indra are 'blamed' (1. 4. 5); they even 'endure the people's curse,' *títikṣante abhíśastiṁ jánānām* (3. 30. 1), but Indra 'satisfies even those that blame' him (8. 70. 10). The *tvānidas*, 'they that blame thee,' are of the first importance in estimating the godship of Indra in the Rig-Veda.²³ It is only gradually that he becomes so great that even among the Vasiṣṭhas he is a 'savior from sin' as well as 'leader of the army' (7. 20. 1, 5). His 'magic' becomes 'wisdom,' and he is extolled by Varuna as well as by Viṣṇu and the bowing Maruts (8. 12. 29; 15. 9; 10. 113. 2). As supreme god Indra 'does not oppose the laws' of other gods (10. 48. 11); he even avenges the wrong done to Varuna (10. 89. 8 f.). Yet this is he who shrinks neither from the vendetta waged by those he has wronged, nor from any crime, *ná kúlbisād īṣate* (5. 34. 4). His every act becomes famous because he is now so great (8. 45. 32). As his two steeds become a hundred (8. 6. 42) and then a thousand (6. 47. 18), adorned with peacock-tails and white backs (3. 45. 1; 8. 1. 25), so has he himself been multiplied and magnified. 'Dyaus Asura bowed to great Indra, Earth also bowed, and all the gods placed him first' (1. 131. 1). He is the 'young' god to whom other gods have yielded their strength; but he is *śivá*, 'kind,' to his worshiper, though a relentless victor and usurper (2. 20. 3 f.). As usurper Indra

²³ In 10. 48. 7 Indra himself asks, 'Why do (my) un-Indra enemies blame me?' The Maruts too are not without their scoffer (5. 42. 10; cf. 6. 52. 2). Viṣṇu as 'friend' of Indra may also be blamed (10. 27. 6, Ludwig). In 2. 23. 14 some blame Br̥haspati (Indra).

is extolled; he is the great thief among the gods. It is he who stole (1. 131. 4) not only earth and water and Soma, but the dawns with the sun (2. 20. 5, *muṣṇánn uṣásah*). ‘Being lord because of thy physical power thou hast stolen the sun’s disk’ (1. 175. 4; cf. 1. 11. 4, ‘of unlimited power, the youthful wise one?’). Thus truly the Viśvāmitras, one of his triumphant clans, may say of him that ‘he is the only king of the whole world,’ and the Kanvas cry, ‘the gods have bowed themselves to thy friendship, O Marudgana’ (3. 46. 2; 8. 89. 2; 8. 98. 3).

On the whole, of former interpretations of Indra, that offered by Hillebrandt best agrees with what has here been unfolded. His idea is that Indra was originally the sun, but in the Rig-Veda is no longer the sun-god, while not yet a rain-god. This, to be sure, leaves the Vedic Indra suspended like an epic sage in mid-air, so to speak, but it is a helpful explanation, and the only one that resolves, in a measure, the many elements of fertility; unless indeed one adopts the older attitude of Roth and Perry and holds that as universal god Indra is explicable in any function,²⁴ which seems to me impossible, as Indra’s gradual growth is unmistakable. Yet I cannot accept Indra as originally a sun-god when he slays Arbuda with cold (nor translate *hiména* with Hillebrandt as ‘in winter’) and assumes (steals) solar powers and only in the latest hymns is ‘like the sun’ or is the sun. Nor can I see why a god of light should have become obnoxious to the treatment Indra received from Zoroaster or Zoroastrianism. If originally the sun, he should have become a favorite, not the third-worst devil. Vṛtra too as winter cold opposes all tradition. If we imagine Indra first as a demon of fertility, his rise to chief war-god among two or three clans is on a par with similar development elsewhere, and his rise from war-god to greatest god of the larger group of clans is like that of most successful war-gods, for example those of Babylon and Assyria. Even his aspect as healer is consonant with his origin as here depicted.²⁵ Witness the healing qualities of the Food-spirit in Shintoism, now curer of ills as well as genius of fertility and food.

²⁴ Hillebrandt, *Vedische Mythologie*, 3. 251; Perry, JAOS. 11. 69. Oldenberg, *Die Religion des Veda*, p. 143, points out that Indra is a rain-god also in Pāli literature.

²⁵ Health and water ‘as medicine’ are connected. See 5. 53. 14, where all three come from the Maruts.

If the development of Mars, as some think, were certainly from a fertility-spirit, we should have in him a good parallel to Indra. Apollo, too, who begins as spirit of herds and flocks, is identified with the Ram (-god, Karneios), has his love-affairs with nymphs and shepherdesses, becomes identified with the sun, and then appears as a healer (he came to Rome first as Apollo Medicus), which seems to have been very nearly the career of Indra, though I should ascribe to the latter god a more general productivity than that evinced by Apollo's care for cattle. Perhaps, however, we are too prone to make specialists of the ancient clan-gods. Departmental spirits have their place, but the chief god of any clan has from the first more to attend to than have they. *Juppiter et laeto descendet plurimus imbri*, long after he becomes the national god, Stator, Victor, Invictus, Maximus, Optimus; not because he assumes universal guardianship and then *inter alia* sees to rain, but because, despite his later greatness, he retains his primitive duty of caring for his clan in all ways.